

now the situation with the United States and others trying to bail them out of their situation.

Mr. Speaker, from the subject of illegal narcotics which does not often put a smile on my face to the final 10 minutes, I wanted to first just pay a moment of tribute to veterans. I will not be in the District in time for veterans celebration, but every American should pay particular attention and honor tomorrow, Veterans' Day. Veterans Day started out, I believe, at the end of World War I, on the 11th hour, the 11th day; and in my home communities from Daytona Beach to Orlando, we will have a series of wonderful ceremonies to honor veterans, at Woodlawn Cemetery in Orlando. David Christianson, the most decorated Vietnam hero, will be the featured speaker.

In Port Orange, one of the young high school groups there will be having a flag retiring ceremony. In De Land, a beautiful community, tomorrow afternoon at 3, they will be having a parade through the community to honor our veterans and so on throughout central Florida.

I would like to spend a moment to pay tribute to our veterans to whom we owe so much. I spent Monday on my way back to Washington visiting the Bill Chappell clinic in Daytona Beach and went around and talked to each of the veterans that was there on an unannounced visit to see how their care was and how they were being taken care of as far as patients in the veterans facility. I am pleased that almost all of them were very satisfied with the care.

I pay also particular tribute to those who do care for our veterans in our hospitals and clinics across the country. The most important responsibility under this Constitution is indeed our national security. The reason for which this country came together was for national security. We must pay honor and tribute and respect to those veterans who are among us and also who are not with us who we remember on Memorial Day, but tomorrow we remember those who again have served this Nation. So we salute all of our veterans, not only in Florida's Seventh Congressional District from Orlando to Daytona Beach, but across this great land. That is one little tribute that I wanted to pay.

The other item that I wanted to conclude with is some good news for the House of Representatives and the American people. Finally, after more than a decade, we have completed the first step in making a reality a visitors center for the American people when they visit our great Capitol. The Capitol has a rich history. It goes back to being located here in 1790 by an act of Congress. Congress was sort of vagabond before that, met in Philadelphia, New York, Annapolis, Harrisburg and a dozen different locations. Finally, in 1790, they decided to come here.

They decided to begin construction in 1793 of the Capitol and it was to be two wings, the Senate wing here, actually sort of turned out like most government projects, it was running behind schedule and overbudget; and they decided just to build this one wing which is the north wing towards Union Station. To get that done and to get the Congress here by 1800, which will be 200 years, they worked feverishly and abandoned plans for the House wing. And then in 1800, in December, the House located here. In 1807, they built the second wing. They were connected actually in between by a trellis for a number of years. And then in 1827 they built the center rotunda and the Capitol looked a bit like this.

This is a pretty good picture. One of the oldest pictures, that first Capitol was designed first of all by Dr. Thornton who actually did not even get in the competition that the Congress had advertised for, came in late, but Thomas Jefferson and George Washington liked the design so much that they took his design even if it came in after the bids all closed. In 1827 we completed the Bullfinch Dome and the Capitol had these two wings and the rotunda in between.

Today, we have the Capitol with the dome which was added in 1863 and the wings, the House wing in 1857, the Senate wing, the north wing, in 1859. You can see the original first building, and then the House building, the connection, the changing of the center and the addition of this beautiful dome designed by Thomas Walters and the statue of freedom up on top, which was taken down recently, refurbished and put back, that was put up there in 1863.

The other addition to the Capitol is the east front was redone. It was crumbling in the late 1950s, 1958 to I think 1962, that was taken off and redone. So they extended the east front of the Capitol.

Not since that point have we enlarged the Capitol, and never to my knowledge have we really done anything specifically for the American people to accommodate them when they come to visit here. We have millions and millions of visitors who crowd the Capitol building.

I am very pleased that we have completed work and approval; I served as a member of the Capitol Preservation Commission, on a Capitol visitors center. This was not my idea. It was started in the 1980s, late 1980s. I believe Vic Fazio, a Congressman from California, initiated some of the proposals that got into a partisan conflict; and it was derailed, although a study was done in 1991 to create a visitors center.

This past week, the visitors center authorizing body, which is the Capitol Preservation Commission, 18 Members of the House and Senate authorized moving forward in the next phase the approval of some \$12 million for the

center and reconfirmed that the visitors center will be in the east front, towards the Supreme Court and the Library of Congress.

Everything will be located underground. It will not change the view. There will be three stories underground, if I can get this up here quickly. Two stories will be exhibition space, solely for visitors. There will be three auditoriums, one 550-seat, two 250-seat. Right now we really do not even have a place to bring folks in. In fact, folks stand out in line in rain, snow, sleet, whatever, subject to the elements.

Two top stories will accommodate visitors, rest rooms, first aid facilities. Again, everything underground. It will not change any of the view of the Capitol building. The bottom level will be a service floor, goods and services will come in through a tunnel. The tunnel was planned sometime ago, and part of it exists now. Rather than having the trash and garbage and other service deliveries through the front door of the Capitol, that will all be done underground. Accommodations for our visitors trying to bring to life the Capitol, and also to make their visit more pleasant.

We are just about at capacity. Plus we do not have assistance for those who are disabled, handicapped and others to get around the Capitol. This is one of the most exciting improvements ever to our Nation's Capitol, the symbol of freedom for the entire world and, of course, our Nation. It will make visits for students, for adults, for elderly, for infirm so much more pleasant.

I am so pleased to have had the leadership of the House and Senate in this effort. I commend all those involved. It is an exciting project not only for the Congress but for the American people and the country.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. DEGETTE (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today after 3:30 p.m. on account of official business in the District.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MARKEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. LIPINSKI, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. BROWN of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. TAUZIN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)